(b) No, Sir. Ministry of Water Resources is not approving any proposal of privatization rivers.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

River projects as national assets

2008. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL:
SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has declared fourteen river projects as national assets;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Sardar Sarover Project does not figure among these projects; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOUCRES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes sir;

(b) Yes sir;

(c) Currently, the Sardar Sarovar Project is already eligible for 90% central grant for the irrigation component to the project falling under drought prone and tribal area. The power House of the project has already been completed. Up to 2006-07, the Sardar Sarovar Project has been provided with Central Assistance of Rs. 4537.7385 crore under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) which is highest Central Assistance provided to any project in the country.

Imposition of higher excise duties on SUVs and commercial buses'

2009. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an environmental group has urged Government to impose higher excise duty on Sports Utilities Vehicle (SUV) and commercial buses;

(b) whether it is a fact that the environment group has urged Government to reduce duties on small cars; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Government has received a request in the pre-budget stage from a non-Governmental Organisation, namely, 'Centre For Science and Environment' suggesting the excise duty rate on small cars and SUVs should be increased in the furture depending on fuel and emission efficiency. However, CSE has suggested that the present rate of 16% excise duty on small cars and 24% on SUVs should be maintained in the budget. No suggestion to impsoe higher excise duty on commercial buses has been received from them.

(c) Having regard to all relevant facts, Government has reduced excise duty from 16% to 12% on small cars, buses and other motor vehicles for transport of more then 13 persons. Excise duty rate on SUVs has been maintained at 24%.